

Message Text

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 118531

EXDIS EYES ONLY FOR DEPUTY ASSISTANT SECRETARY OAKLEY

FOLLOWING REPEAT MANILA 7610 ACTION SECSTATE MAY 19, 1977

QTE C O N F I D E N T I A L MANILA 7610

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: SHUM, US, RP

SUBJECT: THROUGH THE LOOKING GLASS

1. SUMMARY: WENT TO A SURPRISE PARTY AT MANNY'S, SAT NEXT TO A LADY WITH A LOT TO SAY, EVIDENTLY TOO MUCH FOR ONE NIGHT, SINCE SHE SUGGESTED LUNCH ON FRIDAY, BUT NOT AT HER PLACE, WE SETTLED ON MINE.

2. MANNY IS ACTING SECRETARY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRES MANUEL COLLANTES; THE LADY IS MRS. MARCOS; TOPICS WERE THE SCHIZOPHRENIC PHILIPPINES, DEVELOPMENT, MINING, CERAMICS, ARCHITECTURE, CHAIRMAN MAO, GENERAL MACARTHUR, WESTERN PRESS, WOMEN'S RESPONSIBILITIES, COMMUNISM, LEADERSHIP, HUMAN RIGHTS, CONFIDENTIAL

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THE HERRERA CASE, ETC. I LISTENED; WE DANCED. END SUMMARY

3. ACCORDING TO MRS. MARCOS, THE PHILIPPINES IS POSITIONED BETWEEN EAST AND WEST, FACING THE PACIFIC OCEAN--AMERICA, THE IDEOLOGICAL RIGHT; AND THE CHINA SEA--PRC, THE IDEOLOGICAL LEFT. NORTH AND SOUTH, CHRISTIANITY CONFRONTS AN ISLAM BACKED BY POWERFUL EXTERNAL FORCES. TO BOOT, THERE ARE

7600 (SIC) ISLANDS TO BE HELD TOGETHER. THE PHILIPPINES BELONGS TO NEITHER IDEOLOGICAL AGGREGATION BUT IS MORE COMFORTABLE WITH THE WEST BECAUSE THE LATTER PERMITS FULL DEVELOPMENT OF INDIVIDUAL POTENTIAL. THE PHILIPPINES REACHES OUT, BUT THE WEST BITES THAT QUESTING HAND IN IGNORANCE THROUGH A VICIOUS PRESS. THE PHILIPPINES CANNOT AFFORD THE EXCESSES OF THE WESTERN PRESS WHICH WOULD UNDERMINE DOMESTIC STABILITY. SPECIFICALLY THE WESTERN PRESS CRITICIZES HER AT EVERY TURN, HER CLOTHES, HER STYLE, HER MANNER, AND IT RIDICULOUSLY SUGGESTS SHE MAY BE THE RICHEST WOMAN IN THE WORLD, WHEN ALL SHE SEEKS IS TO SERVE HER PEOPLE.

4. THE PRESIDENT AND SHE, MRS. MARCOS CONTINUED, CANNOT BE GUIDED BY CONSTANT PROMPTING FROM PEOPLE WHO UNDERSTAND NOT THAT WHEREAS THE ULTIMATE FOR THE U.S. IS QUALITY OF LIFE, FOR THE PHILIPPINES IT IS SURVIVAL. SHE BELIEVES IN HUMAN RIGHTS, BUT STRONG LEADERSHIP IS ESSENTIAL LEST THE CENTRIFUGAL FORCES BURST PHILIPPINES SOCIETY ASUNDER. IT IS RATHER LIKE REINING A HORSE, TOO TIGHT AND THE BEAST REBELS, TOO LOOSE AND IT RUNS AWAY.

5. MRS. MARCOS REFERRED INDIRECTLY TO THE HERRERA CASE, ASSERTING THAT THE LADY IS A COMMUNIST AND AS FREQUENTLY IN SUCH CASES, DETAINEES HAMMER THEIR OWN FINGERS AND LOUDLY CRY TORTURE.

6. WE REMARKED UPON MY ONCE HAVING ASKED HER HOW SHE WOULD ADVISE A FOREIGNER TO PROCEED IN ORDER BEST TO UNDERSTAND THE PHILIPPINES. (THEN HER EYES HAD BEEN CONFIDENTIAL

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FILLED WITH TEARS WHEN SHE RESPONDED, "YOU ARE THE FIRST PERSON EVER TO ASK ME THAT QUESTION.") THIS TIME SHE ALLUDED KNOWINGLY TO MY BRIEFING OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF THE MANUFACTURERS HANOVER TRUST COMPANY AT THE PHILIPPINE PLAZA HOTEL ON MONDAY, MAY 16. I SUGGESTED SHE MIGHT WISH TO REVIEW THE TAPE AND EVALUATE MY PERFORMANCE. SHE AGREED ENTHUSIASTICALLY AND PROPOSED WE DISCUSS IT AT LUNCH FRIDAY, BUT NOT AT THE PALACE. SO IT'S LUNCH AT MY PLACE WITH A FEW EMBASSY OFFICERS TO BROADEN THE EXPOSURE. IT SHOULD BE INTERESTING SINCE THE MANUFACTURERS HANOVER TRUST CO. BRIEFING WAS A BROAD, CANDID, ONE-HOUR PRESENTATION. (LIVING DANGEROUSLY, PERHAPS, BUT THERE MAY BE BENEFIT IN GETTING IT THIS WAY TO A PALACE WHICH APPEARS TO ASSUME THE WORST FROM US.) STULL UNQTE VANCE

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